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TAGS: EAIR ECON PREL PTER ICAO XX
SUBJECT: RESULTS OF ICAO'S TWENTIETH AVIATION SECURITY PANEL MEETING

¶1.   Summary. Transportation Security Administration officials
led the U.S. delegation to the International Civil Aviation
Organization's (ICAO) Twentieth Aviation Security Panel of
Experts (AVSECP) meeting and presented two U.S. working paper
proposals and an information paper on the supply chain approach
to air cargo security, introducing unpredictability into an
aviation security regime, as well as a report from the first
meeting of a U.S.-chaired New and Emerging Threats Working
Group.   The U.S. delegation gained wide support among panel
members for U.S. proposals, notably for the concepts of supply
chain security and unpredictability as a supplemental tool in
enhancing baseline security in the airport environment.   End
Summary.

BACKGROUND

¶2.   The AVSECP, an expert advisory body established by ICAO, is
responsible for developing new aviation security Standards and
Recommended Practices (SARPs), among other duties. The Panel
submits recommendations the ICAO Council, which may adopt and
incorporate the SARPs into Security Annex 17 to the Convention
on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention) governing
international aviation security. The Twentieth Meeting of the
Aviation Security Panel (AVSECP/20) was held in Montreal from 30
March - 3 April 2009. Cindy Farkus, the Transportation Security
Administration's Assistant Administrator for the Office of
Global Strategies, led the U.S. delegation.

U.S. PROPOSALS

¶3.   The United States received universal support and positive
feedback on its two working papers and one information paper.
All will be referred to the ICAO Council for further
consideration and approval. The U.S. papers can be accessed on
ICAO's secure website.

¶4.   Report of the New and Emerging Threats Working Group.
This paper detailed the process, discussion, and outcomes of the
first meeting of ICAO's New and Emerging Threats Working Group
(NETWG) held from 6 to 8 January 2009 in Washington, D.C.,
including experts from eight countries and ICAO staff.
Discussions were focused on the use of risk assessment and
management models for the process of analyzing the threats (both
nature and likelihood) and civil aviation's vulnerabilities to
those threats, i.e. the risk as a means of identifying gaps in
the mitigating measures in Annex 17 -- Security. The group also
discussed in detail a consolidated list of threats passed, on a
restricted basis, to the working group by the G8 Roma-Lyon
Transportation Security Subgroup. Through small, focused
discussion groups, the NETWG reached consensus on four
categories of threats: artfully concealed weapons; person-borne
improvised explosive devices; vehicle-borne improvised
explosives devices; and air cargo. In sum, the group made
significant progress in identifying potential gaps in existing
measures and providing recommendations for consideration by the
panel.

¶5.   The NETWG report group was passed to the Amendment 12
working group, which is tasked with identifying and proposing
language for new Standards and Recommended Practices to be
included in Amendment 12 to Annex 17 -- Security. The panel
agreed to allow a change in the name of the group in order to
address the notion of `evolving' threats. The next NETWG
meeting is tentatively scheduled for the first week in June 2009
and will be hosted by the co-chair, the United Kingdom.   The
report generated positive comments regarding the importance of a
proactive approach to threats rather than a reactive one and
several states mentioned their concern over cyber-threats. The
UK will ask its own experts and those from a recently convened
EC workshop on cyber-threats (nfi) to make a presentation during
the next working group meeting.

¶6.   Air Cargo Supply Chain Management. This paper outlined the
elements and benefits of supply chain screening and "chain of
custody" requirements for securing air cargo, which emphasizes
effective security management of the entire air cargo supply
chain. The supply chain approach to air cargo security has been
implemented successfully in the Republic of Ireland and the
United Kingdom (UK); is under consideration by Canada and the
European Commission as a way of increasing air cargo security;
and is similar to an initiative undertaken by the International
Air Transport Association, referred to as "Secure Freight." The
United States has developed a system, modeled after those in
Ireland and the UK, referred to as the Certified Cargo Screening
Program, to provide a mechanism by which industry may achieve
100 percent screening without impeding the flow of commerce.
Benefits include decreased air carrier delays and expedited
supply chain flow; the ability to build bulk configurations that
can be tendered without re-screening; the ability to ship
certain cargo types without potential invasive screening later
in the chain; and the ability to maintain in-house packaging
integrity.

¶7.   The air cargo working paper received positive responses from
Australia, the UK, Mexico, Singapore, Switzerland, Saudi Arabia,
Italy, Senegal, Japan, Argentina, and India. Nearly all
expressed support for supply chain security principles and
highlighted similar efforts in their own countries. The UK
noted that this was one area in aviation security where the
international community was implementing measures "ahead of the
game" instead of reacting to events.   Cautionary messages from
panel members centered on discouraging "unilateral measures" and
imposing 100 percent physical screening requirements. The panel
then agreed to add elements of the U.S. paper to guidance
material, referred the matter to the Amendment 12 working group
to explore ways to incorporate supply chain elements to SARPs,

and urged the creation of a joint Secretariat study group on the facilitation/aviation security aspects of the supply chain. The final panel report further reflected its endorsement of supply chain security management and that the concept should be "considered for inclusion in Annex 17."

¶8. Building Unpredictability into an Aviation Security Regime. This information paper offered the premise that civil aviation faces an adaptive and motivated enemy whose choice of target and attack method depends significantly on the perceived and actual vulnerability of the security system. Terrorists can analyze a static system easily by identifying where, how, and when resources are used, thereby allowing them a greater opportunity to identify weaknesses, circumvent the system, and exploit vulnerabilities. By implementing various security measures within existing security layers in an unpredictable and random approach, terrorists' plans can be frustrated, attacks may be deterred, and countermeasures can be deployed flexibly and quickly in response to emerging threats.

¶9. Qatar, Mexico, Canada, Switzerland, Brazil, Germany, Singapore and Saudi Arabia intervened to express their appreciation for the working paper and the concept of introducing unpredictability into an aviation security regime. Mexico said that it was a valuable tool for states with limited resources.   Saudi Arabia suggested it be addressed as a "strategic objective" during a possible future international aviation conference and Canada asked that the Amendment 12 working group consider adding language in Annex 17 that reflects the principle and benefits of the approach. Some debate centered around cautioning against reducing baseline security in order to add in unpredictable elements and around the idea of maintaining passenger comfort by retaining common practices from one destination to another. In the end, the chair summarized by saying that unpredictability was a key element in the evolution from excelling at screening to developing innovative and new measures to thwart terrorists.

OTHER KEY ISSUES

¶10.   Other objectives met at this meeting included:

  a) Encouraging threat-related information sharing among Contracting States;

  b) Supporting a proposal to establish a Technological Working Group to advise the Panel on security-related technologies for liquids, aerosols and gels and other threats;

  c) Urging the creation of a temporary working group to develop a revised security plan of action   that will take global security in a new and focused direction;

  d) Urging greater transparency in the ICAO Universal Security Audit Process (USAP);

  f) Encouraging an exchange of information between Donor States in the provision of assistance to   developing nations to avoid duplication of effort and wasted resources;

  g) Monitoring discussions related to a possible requirement for 100 percent staff screening and;

  h) Conducting bilateral meetings with member states and participating in sidebar discussions.

¶11. Coordinating Assistance to States (Partner/Donor Meeting-). ICAO staff provided an overview of a new ICAO coordinated development database of assistance programs offered worldwide and especially in Africa.   ICAO's Implementation Support and Development Branch encouraged States to send in data regarding training and assistance programs and nominations for subject matter experts to conduct training worldwide.   ICAO previewed its new "Go Team" concept which mirrors TSA's Aviation Security Sustainable International Standards Teams program (ASSIST), which sends a group of veteran security experts to collaborate

with local security officials to address several security needs
at one time (following an initial security assessment of
training needs, equipment, current aviation programs, and
aviation security legislation). The teams work to build aviation
security capacity, practices, and sustainable institutions
through local alliances.

CONCLUSION

¶12. The U.S. delegation achieved its goals of gaining
international support for its three paper proposals.   The
U.S. looks forward to future collaborative and proactive work
with the aviation security panel, its working groups and
contracting states, to identify new, evolving and emerging
threats, share threat information, increase transparency in the
universal security audit program, and strengthen Annex 17 and
guidance material to include the concepts of supply chain
security in air cargo and unpredictability, among other
objectives.

¶13. We greatly appreciate Posts' assistance in this effort and
their ongoing support for international civil aviation matters.
Please direct questions or requests for additional information
pertaining to this cable to Jillene.MacCreery@dhs.gov (tel.: +1
571-227-2244).

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